

Message Text

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13

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-11 L-03 ACDA-19

NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 DRC-01 /092 W

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P R 041510Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 773

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

SECDEF

CINCUSNAVEUR

EDH-ALTANEA VICENZA

JCS

CDRUSASEFAT

USCINCEUR

USDOSOUTH

USNMR SHAPE

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 4936

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL IT YO NATO

SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION TO YUGOSLAVIA RE: NATO EXERCISES IN
ADRIATIC

REF: (A) USNATO 5367; (B) ROME 13277 (BOTH NOTAL)

1. WE ARE PERPLEXED BY SEVERAL THINGS IN REFTELS:

A. THE ONLY TIME THE QUESTION OF ALTANEA 74 HAS BEEN
RAISED WITH THE ITALIAN EMBASSY HERE WAS ONE CURSORY
REFERENCE IN A CONVERSATION WITH AN ITALIAN EMBASSY
OFFICER. THIS REFERENCE WAS NOT SUCH THAT IT COULD HAVE
FORMED THE BASIS FOR THE ALLEGED DISCUSSION OF ITS BEING
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"PROVOCATIVE" TO THE YUGOSLAVS. HHE AMBASSADOR AT NO

TIME DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR AS ALLEGED.

B. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY UNDERWATER DEMOLITION EXERCISE "IN THE VICINITY OF TRIESTE".

C. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF A PROPOSED NAVOCFORMED ADRIATIC VISIT.

2. EMBASSY ASSUMES THE UNDERWATER DEMOLITION EXERCISE MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH ALTANEA 74. BASIS FOR THIS ASSUMPTION IS INFORMATION PASSED TO US OCT 3 BY ITALIAN DCM HERE THAT THE ITALIANS HAD ON OCT 1 INFORMED THE YUGOSLAVS OF THE "SMALL EXERCISE WHICH WOULD TAKE PLACE NEAR VENICE". QUESTIONING MADE IT FAIRLY CLEAR THIS REFERRED TO ALTANEA 74. THIS HOWEVER RAISES YET ANOTHER QUESTION. THERE HAS NEVER TO OUR KNOWLEDGE BEEN DISCUSSION OF NOTIFYING THE YUGOSLAVS ABOUT ALTANEA 74. QUITE TO THE CONTRARY, THE WHOLE THRUST OF THE EXCHANGE ON THIS SUBJECT HAS BEEN HOW TO AVOID DRAWING YUGOSLAV ATTENTION TO IT. WE FAIL TO UNDERSTAND HOW ANY DECISION COULD HAVE BEEN MADE TO NOTIFY THE YUGOSLAVS WITHOUT THIS EMBASSY HAVING BEEN CONSULTED.

3. AS FOR A PROPOSED ACTIVATION OF NAVOCFORMED IN THE ADRIATIC SOMETIME AFTER OCT 18, THIS IS A COMPLETELY NEW TOPIC TO US. IF THE NATURE OF THIS PROPOSED ACTIVATION IS SUCH THAT IT WOULD REQUIRE NOTIFICATION OF THE YUGOSLAVS AS INDICATED IN REF A, THEN WE FAIL TO UNDERSTAND WHY IT IS NEWS TO US. DURING AMBASSADOR'S CONSULTATIONS IN DEFENSE AND STATE IN JUNE, AGREEMENT WAS REACHED THAT EMBASSIES ROME AND BELGRADE WOULD BE CONSULTED DURING PLANNING STAGE OF ANY EXERCISE IN AREA WHICH WOULD BE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE. THIS AGREEMENT WAS REFLECTED IN STATE 188703.

4. AT THIS JUNCTURE, ABOUT ALL WE CAN DO IS INDULGE IN DAMAGE LIMITATION. WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF ALTANEA 74 NOW PROVIDED THE YUGOSLAVS, WE WILL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHETHER THEY DECIDE TO USE IT. TRIESTE ZONE B POLEMICS HAVE COOLED SOMEWHAT RECENTLY AND MINIC-MORO
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TALKS IN NEW YORK MAY HAVE HELPED. HOWEVER, THE YUGOSLAVS NOW ARE AROUSED OVER AUSTRIAN CENSUS OF SLOVENIAN AND OTHER MINORITIES, AND THIS IRE CAN EASILY SPILL OVER TO ITALY (THERE ALREADY HAVE BEEN ONE OR TWO REFERENCES TO SLOVENIAN MINORITY THERE). MORE TO THE POINT, YUGOSLAVS HAVE JUST SETTLED ACCOUNTS WITH PRO-SOVIET "COMINFORMIST" GROUP, WITH ACCOMPANYING WESTERN PRESS COMMENTARY ON THE DAMAGE THIS DID TO YUGOSLAV-SOVIET RELATIONS. GIVEN

THE TENDENCY HERE TO "BALANCE" ACTIONS HAVING TO DO WITH GREAT POWER BLOCS, THEY NOW HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO HANDED THEM ON A PLAATER IF THEY CHOSE TO USE IT.

5. IN ORDER TO TRY TO SORT OUT OUR OPTIONS AT THIS JUNCTURE, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED ON FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. WHAT WAS BASIS OF ITALIAN DECISION TO INFORM YUGOSLAVS ABOUT ALTANEA 74, AND WAS USG CONSULTED?

B. IS ALLEGED DEMOLITION TEAM EXERCISE "IN VICINITY OF TRIESTE" IN FACT ALTANEA 74, OR IS IT SOMETHING ELSE?

C. SCOPE OF PROPOSED NAVOCFORMED ACTIVATION.
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